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West Indies, Eng script historic Test victories

Thousands of miles away from each other, India and Australia, two indomitable Test sides at home, suffered shocking defeats on Sunday. West Indies pacer Shamar Joseph took seven wickets to help his team beat Australia by eight runs in Brisbane. England's Ollie Pope and Tom Hartley were the heroes in the second match as India lost by 28 runs after securing a 190-run lead | **P13**

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Nitish back in NDA, swears in as Bihar CM for the ninth time

BJP's Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha become deputy chief ministers

RAMASHANKAR @Patna

CURTAINS fell on the week-long political drama in Bihar on Sunday with Janata Dal (United) president Nitish Kumar taking oath as chief minister for a record ninth term — this time with the support of his old ally, the BJP.

Soon after taking oath as the CM of the new NDA government, Nitish said: "I am back where I was earlier. I had gone with other another alliance for some time. But now I am back and will remain here forever."

Earlier in the day, Nitish met Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and submitted his resignation as the Mahagathbandhan chief minister. After that, he staked claim to form a new government with the support of the BJP and its allies. He claimed the support of 128 MLAs — 45 from JD(U), 78 from BJP, 4 from HAM and 1 Independent. Bihar has 243 assembly seats.

In the swearing-in ceremony held on Sunday evening, Nitish, Vijay Kumar Choudhary, Vijendra Prasad Yadav, Shravan Kumar from the JD-U; Samrat Choudhary, Vijay Kumar Sinha, and Prem Kumar from the BJP; Santosh Kumar Suman from HAM; and, Sumit Kumar Singh (Independent) took oath as cabinet ministers in the presence of BJP president J P Nadda and other dignitaries.

Nitish Kumar with Bihar Governor Rajendra Arlekar after the swearing-in ceremony | PTI

All of them had earlier served as ministers in the NDA government after the 2020 assembly election.

Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha will be the two deputy chief ministers. Earlier, rumours were rife that Sushil Kumar Modi, who had served as deputy chief minister during the NDA regime earlier, might be inducted in the Nitish cabinet as deputy CM.

As soon as the swearing-in ceremony started and the name of Nitish was announced, BJP supporters chanted 'Jai Sriram'. Later, slogans in favour of Nitish and other ministers echoed in the air. **P9**

FORMER GRASSROOTS BJP WORKER TO DEPUTY CM

Vijay Kumar Sinha, an experienced upper-caste BJP leader, has held various posts, including that of Bihar Assembly Speaker and the state's leader of the Opposition. Starting off as a grassroots BJP worker, Sinha, 64, made his debut in the Assembly in 2010 and got a ministerial berth seven years later. He belongs to the influential Bhumihar community, was an active member of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad — the RSS' student wing

OBC LEADER WHOSE FORTUNES ROSE WITH BJP

An OBC leader of the BJP in Bihar where the party wants to transcend its "pro-upper caste" image, **Samrat Choudhary** has had a meteoric rise since he joined the outfit nearly seven years ago. Samrat was a minister in the government headed by Rabri Devi, RJD supremo Lalu Prasad's wife. In 2014, he became part of a rebel faction and joined the JD(U) government. Three years later, he grew disenchanted with the JD(U) and joined the BJP

Already knew he was going, says Kharge

PREETHA NAIR @New Delhi

THE latest political somersault by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar invited sharp reactions from the Opposition INDIA bloc on Sunday, with the Congress and other parties warning him that the people will never forgive his "betrayal".

Soon after Kumar announced his decision to form a government with the BJP's support, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said the alliance members had an inkling of his decision to leave. "There are many like 'Aaya Ram-Gaya Ram' in the country. We already knew this, but we did not say anything to keep the INDIA alliance intact. If we say something wrong, a wrong message will go out. Lalu Prasad Yadav ji and Tejashwi Yadav ji had already given us this information," Kharge said.

Comparing Kumar to a "chameleon", Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said, "Nitish Kumar, who frequently changes political partners, is giving tough competition to the chameleons in changing colours." Ramesh said a "political drama" is being created to divert attention from Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, which is set to enter Bihar.

The Congress leaders said Kumar's exit won't affect the alliance's electoral prospects. However, political observers say it will have a ripple effect on the equation of alliances in other states. Speaking to this newspaper, political analyst Sandeep Shastri said, "All the other partners will now play hardball with the Congress."

Police try to pacify the protesters at Keragodu village in Mandya district on Sunday | EXPRESS

LOWERING HANUMAN FLAG TURNS MANDYA TENSE

K SHIVA KUMAR @Mysuru

TENSION gripped Keragodu village in Mandya district as hundreds of people, and BJP and JDS leaders protested against the district administration's move to bring down a Hanuman flag that was hoisted on a 108-foot pole by the gram panchayat to mark Ram Mandir inauguration.

The police resorted to a mild lathicharge and arrested a few protesters, including Assembly Opposition leader R Ashoka, MLA Dr CN Ashwath Narayan and other leaders, when they proceeded towards the barricade put up to protect the flagpole. They were released later. The police snatched a knife from a youth, who threatened to kill himself if the Hanuman Dhwaja was brought down.

It all started when Assistant Commissioner Shiva Murthy and Tahsildar Shivakumar arrived at the village early on Sunday morning to lower the Hanuman flag and hoist the Tricolour. Keragodu villagers, including women, protested and claimed that they had taken permission from the village panchayat to hoist the flag. **CONTINUED ON: P4**

Anganwadi workers not paid for phone data

SUBHASH CHANDRA NS @Karwar

MOBILE phones that were provided to Anganawadi workers to ease their job have turned into a money-draining gadget for them as they are spending from their pockets to recharge phone data packages.

Considering that Anganwadi workers are involved in government-related work, three years ago the government provided them with smartphones, which have now become a burden. The phones, provided under the 'Poshana Abhiyan scheme', allows them to enter data into registers. "We have to enter data daily, but our mobiles have not been recharged so far," said an Anganawadi worker in Karwar.

"It has been more than four months since the mobile data of these phones are recharged. We get Rs 10,000 per month as payment, but we spend from our pockets to recharge data," said Manjula, another Anganawadi teacher. **CONTINUED ON: P5**

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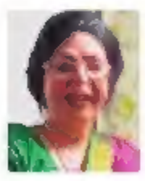
Padma awardee turned from burns victim to burns doc

RISHITA KHANNA @Bengaluru



ONCE known for her melodious voice, which turned hoarse, leading people to address her as 'sir' whenever she made a phone call, **Dr Prema Dhanraj**, who had aspired to become a singer, resolved to turn from a burns survivor to a burns surgeon at the same hospital where she was treated. Despite societal challenges, this 72-year-old specialist turned from a burns victim to a plastic (reconstructive) surgeon after persevering through a gruelling journey. Her determination culminated in a triumph, earning her the civilian honour, the Padma Shri, in this year's list.

Having grown up in a family with her parents as singers, Dr Prema started learning to sing at a young age. **CONTINUED ON: P2**

EXPRESS READ

UGC says de-reservation won't be in final draft

Chennai: After the nationwide backlash over the draft guidelines on de-reservation of vacancies in higher education institutions (HEIs), UGC chairman M Jagadeesh Kumar said de-reservation will not find a place in the final guidelines. **P5**

CJI D Y Chandrachud hands over a statue of B R Ambedkar to Prime Minister Narendra Modi | PTI

Long vacation, adjournment culture need to go, says CJI

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that 'ease of justice' is the right of every citizen and the Supreme Court is its medium. Addressing the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Supreme Court, the PM said the Centre has sanctioned ₹800 crore for expansion of the SC building. Stressing the need for an empowered judicial system as a part of Viksit Bharat, Modi asked the apex court to work towards capacity building of stakeholders to ensure the transition from old laws to the new regime is seamless.

Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said the judiciary needs to begin "difficult conversations" to remain relevant as an institution. He said the 'adjournment culture' and long vacations need to go, to tackle the issue of case backlogs. "We must emerge out of the adjournment culture to a culture of professionalism," he said.

The Chief Justice of India urged all stakeholders to have a meaningful conversation on long vacations and think of alternatives such as flexitime for lawyers and judges to dispose of cases in a reasonable timeframe.